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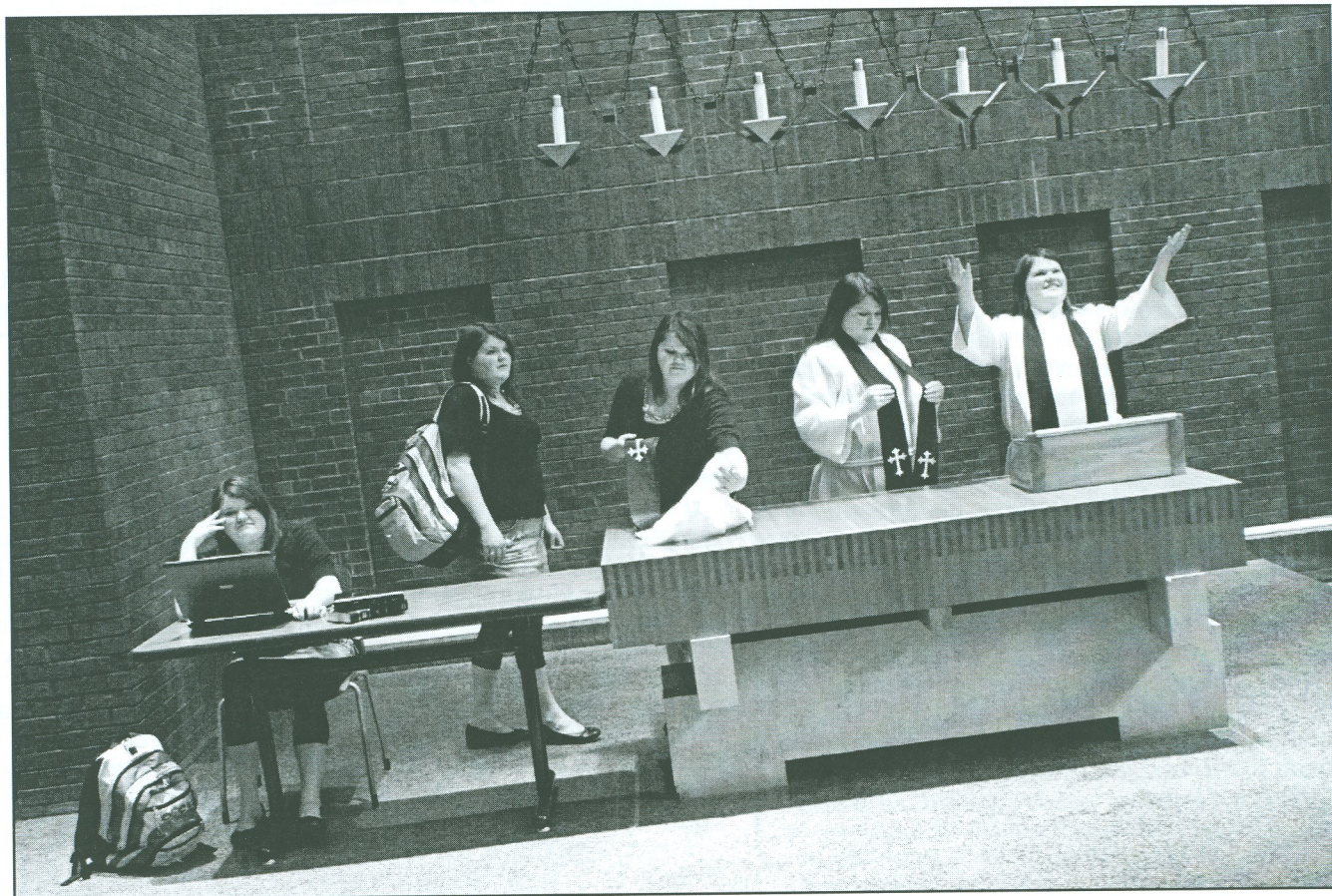
CONCORD

A Journalistic Ministry of Students at Luther Seminary

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Transitions

Taking the next steps

Death by Internship

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Letter From the Editor

By **Nicholas Weber**
Concord managing editor

At this time of year, most of us at Luther Seminary deal with a lot of change. Some of us are off to CPE, internship, first call, or any number of other places. Even those who stay here deal with transitions in community, as every year the seminary community completely changes. In the midst of this, our lives can seem unmoored, without a port to call home. We seek stability, but do not find it. We look for a solid foundation in our academic lives, but get endless debates over semantics and ever-changing scholastic fads. We reach out to the other, but our friends from other classes move on.

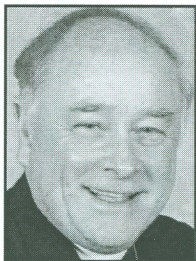
What can we do in the midst of all these changes? It has often been observed that we human beings find pleasure in change as well as in permanence. We try and manage our lives to maintain a certain level of similarity, at the same time injecting enough novelty into our lives in order to keep things interesting. In this place, however, we do not have this luxury. For M.Div. students, candidacy committees often seem to dictate the direction of our lives during this time as students and our lives seem to be without spontaneity, but at the same time we are in a constant state of change. For M.A. students, like M.Div. students, there are various levels of transition, whether it be off to further study or off to work in churches and communities. Even for those who remain physically at Luther, the community changes radically each year, so there is transition even in staying put. There is little chance that much permanence is to be found at Luther.

Yet, there is much to be thankful for in this place. In the midst of the shifting sands of seminary life, we can be thankful that we are living in community with fellow Christians who encourage us, pray for us, play ping-pong with us and remind us of what is important (and take us out for drinks at Manning's). This life together, as Bonhoeffer pointed out, should not be taken for granted. Instead, we should thank God for it. Even as our community changes, we can look to new people to minister to and to minister to us. What if we are leaving? We can still look to our friends to support us in our new lives.

Most importantly, we can look to the foundation of solid rock, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, to be there in times of transition.

From the Mann Himself

Who Is a Good Person to Talk About Transitions?



By **John Mann**
Seminary pastor

I can't be a good person to write about transitions. No matter how positive a pending transition may seem, I confess to a real struggle moving from one stage to another. Even when I am thrilled with relocation, for example, the process of going from one life to another is daunting. The mechanics of the move, the ending of relationships and the beginning of new, and the imagining of vocation in a new context are all energy-consuming beyond description. In fact, when I was in parish ministry I used to find it challenging moving from work to vacation and back. Just for a week's worth of vacation, I spent a week preparing to be gone, two days "de-pressurizing," three days "re-pressurizing" and a week catching up once it was all over. I wondered if it was worth it. It is so much easier just to keep on keeping on!

Part of the challenge of transition, of course, is our comfort with the familiar. Inertia makes continuing on the same path and in the same rhythms easier even when we are preparing for change. There is something built into human nature that seeks stability.

Homeostasis is what medical people call the tendency of the body to maintain basic chemistry and rhythms. As Peter Steinke, the author of several books on congregational systems, once said, "You don't want your heart and lungs trying to figure out more creative patterns of function." Since our instincts comprise much of our brain stem, it is natural that we default to these instinctual patterns under great stress. In other words, we try desperately to stay the same.

Fortunately, that is not all there is. In fact, we are very capable of rising to challenges. We can learn new patterns. People can radically change environments and lifestyles. Once we overcome our own resistances, we are free to adventure and explore.

As we all move through transitions—concluding academic programs, preparing for internship, beginning new vocations, and any number of other transitions—we can step out into the challenges of serving God in new and more creative ways. We can leave the familiar territory behind and become missionaries in whatever strange lands to which we are called. What gives us confidence is that we do so in response to God's call, with Jesus' promise and under the guidance and presence of the Holy Spirit. In faith God allows us to respond, "Here I am, send me!" And God gives us the capacity to faithfully move into God's future.

Thanks be to God!

CONCORD

concord@luthersem.edu • (651) 641-3260

Nicholas Weber, managing editor
Andy Behrendt, production manager
Joel Smeby, copy editor
Katie Fick, contributing editor

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Life Changes Fast—Pack Light

Advice for the journey

By Bob Sinclair
M.Div. middler

Transitions? Are we talking about those cool sunglasses that change in the sunlight? Probably not, otherwise the editors will have a lot of white space to fill. I'm guessing that it's more like:

*Ch-ch-changes,
(turn and face the strain)
Ch-ch-changes
Don't want to be a richer man
Ch-ch-ch-changes
(turn and face the strain)
Ch-ch-changes
Just gonna have to be a different man
Time may change me
But I can't trace time*
—David Bowie, "Changes," *Hunky Dory* (RCA Records 1972)

Change, transition, transformation or whatever you want to call it, is both part of who we are and one of the few certainties we have in life. If you don't think you're changing, think about the

fact that your body regenerates itself every seven years! So what does this mean for us as we progress into the next phase of our lives? There are several tips I'd like to share from an old pro who has moved over 20 times in the last 50 years. First, pack light. Jesus himself gave this bit of advice to the 12 (or 70, depending on which version you like). Nothing bogs us down faster than having too much stuff to cart around. Take an inventory and take only what is essential. I'm not talking just material things. There is also enough emotional and spiritual stuff that we carry around with us, stuff that in the end weighs us down and prevents us from moving on.

This leads to the second suggestion: Take care of your root ball. What the heck is that, you ask? Your root ball is a part of you. It is the friends and family that have nourished you all those years. Wherever you go, you are uprooting a part of yourself, only to be planted somewhere else. Cut the roots too short and the plant (you) will not be able to

If you don't think you're changing, think about the fact that your body regenerates itself every seven years!

thrive, with all of your time taken up trying to survive. Cut the roots too long and the plant (you) will be stifled, unable to fully integrate into the adjoining soil. Finally, explore! Get out and discover the surrounding area. Take in the sights. Meet new folks (I realize for us introverts that is not an easy task). Learn the mores and culture of the area. This exploration waters and nurtures the root ball.

At the beginning of the year the Concord's theme was "Leaps for Faith." Transition is just one more step, or leap in our lives. And we don't go alone. God is with us on this roller coaster. Faith is "Fantastic Adventures In Trusting Him." Yeehaa!

Letter to the Editor: Responding to Change

Dear Concord editors and readers:

I would like to take this opportunity to give my answer to the questions asked about transition in last month's issue.

When the academic year is over, we all go off to different things. First, not everyone is "off to different things." Some of us stay right here doing the same thing we've done each week, each month, and sometimes, each year. You don't have to pack a suitcase to face transitions.

What's next for you? In a large sense, I don't know what's next for me, and neither do you. Some days I would answer "nothing" or "the same old stuff." At times, when life takes a swipe at me and knocks me sideways into next week, my answer would be "I have no idea."

How have you dealt with transition in the past? My answer depends on whether or not the transition was expected or unexpected, planned for or not, happy or not. I do spend time "rehearsing" what I think my reaction(s) will be. But even a transition sought and planned for can produce unexpected reactions. For me, the unexpected reactions are usually the more meaningful.

How do you plan on dealing with it now? The transitions experienced by the students at Luther Seminary also affect me. To those students packing their bags: Your sojourn at Luther Seminary has changed my life in ways we may never fully know. I think it's important to take some time to talk to those people I may never see again. I don't intend to say "we'll

keep in touch" or "see you soon." I don't know that either of these events will actually occur. I intend to say a word of thanks to them and to God that we were brought together at this place and time.

What advice do you have for those making the next step? Don't expect that your planning will make this transition easier. And don't be disappointed when your plans fall through. I believe that big transitions (first call, new job, CPE, internship, retirement, travel, even death and tragic accidents) are easier to manage than gradual transitions. We all pray, plan and support each other during big transitions—much of our Christian faith and community is centered on this. It's the little, gradual transitions that can be troublesome—mostly because we don't recognize them when they are happening. Too often we find ourselves saying "time flies" or "has it been that long?" or even, "when did that happen?" Try and live with a heart and mind prepared for whatever is next. I keep a very short list of what is "serious." I look for laughter in the daily events of life. I think of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.

How is God at work during times of transition? No differently than how God is at work in our daily lives all the time. But I remind myself to take a little extra time to listen.

Judy Hedman

Administrative assistant to Dean of Students

Dying to Illusion

By Natalie Gessert
M.Div. intern

An internship, if executed correctly, can kill you.

Of course, I was excited for internship: waiting with feigned patience for my fate for the next twelve months. As a freshly matriculated middler, internship is the chance to everyone that you have what it takes to wear the white tab with panache, brimming with lofty goals for church growth and fabulous education programs for Christ Trinity Holy Mother of St. Thomas the Younger of Dakota Paradise Lutheran Church.

And then you arrive.

Everyone is terribly friendly. Brownies may arrive at your door and there is the borrowed plush sofa covered with pet hair. You learn who to rub elbows with and who might be in cahoots with the Dark Lord. Then there's your supervisor. He or she may be the sort to wear Birkenstocks with socks or perhaps an Armani suit to work. Either way, they will greet you with a smile and hand you a text to read that you were convinced was heretical.

After a few months you have your rhythm. Some weeks you may feel that you are observing perfect pastoral ministry. Others, the opposite. You hear, "so this is what the seminary is producing" (add inflection as you will). You receive tantalizing spam, "A New Internship Is Available For You!" This occurs when I feel like responding, "Really? Where to?"

Nevertheless, there will be a moment when your supervisor says, "May I please have your rose-tinted spectacles?" He opens a new box and hands you the new pair, "These should do for a time," he says with a smile. And then squinting, you will see.

With this new sight it will seem strange that your

parishioners do not look like movie stars. There are short ones, fat ones, curious ones, and ones who snooze through your perfectly chanted liturgy. Some think they have their GPS set on the narrow road to perfection, others make it clear they are "not the church type." There are professionals who aim to read the entire Bible in a year and the faithful quilters who meet every Wednesday—the quilters who knew the whole Bible by heart since 1864.

Internship is a year to see the world as it really is; it hurts to have those old spectacles taken away. You will wonder why your perfect sermon didn't seem so perfect to everyone else. You may go home and stare at a wall because the day at hospice drained you completely. Oftentimes you will find yourself with large spans of time, wondering what your place in the ministry of the church is in the space of one year and how to participate. But, if your internship year is properly executed, it should kill you. Your internship year will take away your imaginary notions of ministry and the comfort of seminary, replacing them with the strange reality of parish life.

At the end of the summer I will return to Luther Seminary. However, I will return changed, after being steeped in the daily life and raw experience of those dear members of my church. The books and papers, due dates and long Greek nights will still be waiting at Luther Seminary. However, I have learned that seminary is not meant as a filling station, fueling eager seminarians with interesting facts. Seminary education is clearly meant to be received for the sake of those we serve. I am learning and working on behalf of those in my congregation, community and world. I will return with a sense of privilege that it is to be sent out that I have arrived in the first place—and the call to pastoral ministry is all the more real.

Adopting a New Attitude

By Fenecia Homan
M.Div. middler

"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."
2 Corinthians 12:9

It all began on Easter Sunday, April 4, 1999. In the evening, after our extended family left, my parents, my sister and I were sitting in the living room reading the newspaper. My mom found an article called, "Global Giving: A Family Affair." It was a true story about a family who had connected with an orphanage in Guatemala. She read parts of the article aloud and then she read this sentence, "Diane's most pressing concern now is finding parents for Felix, a 13-year-old."

There was a pause after she read that sentence and we looked at each other and after a brief discussion we all agreed that we had room in our hearts

and our home. Thus, three days later we were adopting a son and a brother, this 13-year-old boy from Guatemala.

It took 20 months and three trips to Guatemala to complete the adoption. On the final trip, my parents flew to Guatemala just before the INS paperwork expired, obtaining his passport and visa with only hours to spare. There were many times during the 20 months that we were trying to adopt Felix that we thought, *Do we just give up? Is this really a faithful decision? Are we just fighting God in all of this?* But in the moments when it would feel most hopeless, something would happen and God would give us hope.

Even though the adoption was finally official on December 8, 2000, the hardest days were yet to come as our family transitioned from a family of four to a family of five. Our seemingly strong family was weakened to the point of

breaking as our expectations wrestled with reality. We all struggled with how to love and to have patience in the midst of rejection. Our weakness overcame us. But it is through this weakness that God reveals and delivers God's grace and God's power. It is through this vulnerability, this weakness, that we are able to truly experience the truth of the Gospel. The grace that Jesus Christ gives us is sufficient for us, for power is made perfect in weakness.

Seven years later, my parents, my sister and I continue to learn how to open our hearts and our minds to Felix. He continues to learn how to accept the unconditional love of a family. Felix has opened my eyes to the subtle messages we send regarding persons of another color. He teaches me about the courage it takes to face a new culture, a new language, the risk of acceptance, and the dream of belonging to a family.

The Pain of Pitching New Tents

God’s stake in your life

By Rachel Fuller
M.Div. junior

Transition—I’ve been there; you’ve been there. It’s not fun, the move from one place to another; the ending and beginning of eras, the haze of limbo that encompasses you until you’ve established new routines and the foreign has become familiar. You’re never really ready for it—at least, I’m not. I read once that ancient Druids were fascinated by what they called the “in-between” things (i.e., transitions of some sort or another). I wonder if they ever moved in the middle of high school, or were caught up in a divorce. It’s not fun. It’s exhausting to prepare for; it’s confusing when you’re in the middle of it, and something important or precious always gets left behind. At the end, you find yourself sitting in the middle of some alien room, surrounded by half-empty boxes and crumpled up newspapers, wondering why the hell you ever thought this was a good idea.

I’ve been there. You’ve been there. It’s not fun.

*At the end, you find yourself sitting
in the middle of some alien room ...
wondering why the hell you ever
thought this was a good idea.*

It’s the little things that always get to you. You’ll be fine, and then a week after things really start to settle down, you’ll be in the middle of addressing a letter and stop, staring blankly down at the envelope because you haven’t yet memorized your new zip code. (Some would stamp their foot in frustration; others would, sensibly, just go and look it up. I would probably burst into tears.)

So why do we do it? Maybe our ancestors were ancient nomads, who, like us, couldn’t seem to resist the call in our bones to peak the next mountain or to cross the next prairie. Are we always drawn to what’s “just around the river bend” or what it would be like to be “part of that world?” (If you know your Disney movies, you’ll understand these references.)

At the risk of sounding like a preacher, I recently heard a metaphor about God that would fit nicely here. It was about the meaning of the word “abide.” Another way to say “God will abide with you” is “God will stake a tent with you.” As each of us moves through whatever coming transition is ahead, remember this: In the midst of the boxes, the newspapers, the lost items and the new zip codes, God will stake a tent with you. And man, those stakes go deep!

Weathering the Weather

New Experiences in America

By William Obaga
Non-degree student

Before coming to the U.S., my family and I had heard about Luther Seminary through some alumni in East Africa. We determined to gain admission here because of the academic degrees that were being offered. Planning to be here for a few years, the decision had major transitional implications, not the least of which was the long distance from some of our children, our extended family, and our familiar environment. We felt trepidation as to the nature of our encounter with a new culture and change in roles from teacher or administrator to student. To our consolation, many local second-career students dealt with similar feelings. Another difficult change was adjusting to high-speed typing skills, understanding the requisite typing formats, using external drives, etc. This was one of the critical challenges we had to overcome when we were still new.

Another difficult part of our transition was the climate. We had been forewarned about the cold winters in the Midwest, especially in Minnesota. Although mentally prepared for the winter, we did not know about the hot summers. The Minnesota type of summer heat and humidity is new to many people lived in the African tropics. We cherished the transition to the beautiful fall weather and our first winter afterwards. The transition to winter was particularly made easy for us through kind and generous support from some members of the local community. Living through the “four seasons,” despite some of the summer or winter discomforts, has been a wonderful experience although we still miss Africa’s perfect climate and, especially, the scenic Kenyan landscapes. When migrating to a new environment some basic fears come to mind, particularly one’s adjustment to a new culture, the loss of personal identity and the availability of familiar food.

There is no doubt that it took a while for us to adjust to some new cultural dynamics, for example, the informal manner in which students and professors addressed or communicated with each other. We also needed to be sure that our own cultural orientation was understood or appreciated. One of the immediate concerns was how to deal with some local prejudices when they cropped up. Furthermore, whereas it was easy to build new friendships in Africa, it took effort to do the same here. However, we have been blessed with well-meaning and deep- rooted friendships among fellow students, faculty, staff, local congregations, and others. This is especially helpful for those of us that cherish meaningful community links.

During our transition many people helped us to adjust: the office of the dean of students and our orientation to American culture through the international students’ office in conjunction with the GMI. Attachments to local churches provided an immediate avenue for understanding the local cultural dynamics. The availability of familiar food stuffs has been a vital component of our transition to Minnesota life. Last but not least, we have cherished our experiences at Luther Seminary, especially our interactions with the diverse academic disciplines, the high quality of academic offerings under such distinguished faculty, the diversity of students and faculty, and the strong international presence of students from Europe, Asia and Africa.

Finding Family

Leaving one home for another

By Kevin Kaiser
M.Div senior

I am about to graduate after six years at Luther. I have left this place once already. The first time, I just didn't like it here. I disagreed with my professors, the workload was too much, and the classes were not what I expected. Candidacy? Let's just say that my entrance interview was more of an orifice than a door. I left for a semester and cleaned for a living. I missed something about this place, though. Whatever it was, I realized that I didn't give Luther Seminary a fair chance because I did not make it my home. So I returned. I live here, I work here, and I have friends here. I pursue my passions of music and food here. I am even received with love by people with whom I completely disagree. I guess that made me family.

Four years after my quiet return, I am about to leave again. This time, I will have a degree in hand with all the rights and privileges that pertain thereof. That degree represents all that has prepared me for the real world of ministry. It represents the boundaries workshop that comes in so handy when my new bishop tells me not to even mention privacy during my call process because

That degree represents all that has prepared me for the real world of ministry.

"small town people just expect to be in your life." It represents the multi-cultural experiences that have prepared me to enter a synod that has about one non-white person per congregation. It represents all those big words that will make congregants stare blankly at me. It represents the daring

teaching of Dr. Paulson, who taught me the difference between preaching and talking, and Dr. Geiser, who taught me the difference between singing and worship.

But I paid for all that. What about those other non-tuition experiences? My degree also represents the conversations in the Bockman lounge and at Manning's. It represents the hospital patient that simply wanted to better his prayer life ... after almost losing his genitals to a shovel. It represents a kitchen staff that received me as a dishwasher and will send me off as an honest-to-goodness cook.

That is just my story. Your story is different. Your story has different friends, different complaints, different celebrations and different classes. Your next step may be a call, a vacation, CPE, internship, or a wedding. Take this year with you because it wasn't just education. Life at Luther is life. It is a small part, but a part nonetheless, of the real world. When you leave for another part of the real world, enter in worship. Enter with enough fear to be in awe. Enter with enough confidence to do the work. Enter with faith that the grace you preach is yours as well. If you feel like you want to come back, don't be surprised. Luther is home after all. I guess that makes you family.

8 Months Down the Road as Pastor

By Carl Fiskness
2007 M.Div. graduate

Since September I have been the pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church of Brookston and Faith Lutheran Church of Culver. Both towns are located in Minnesota, about 25 miles northwest of Duluth. Like most Christian communities in rural areas, the two congregations that I serve are relatively small in size. Each congregation averages about 40 people in worship services on Sunday morning.

Being in small parishes, I wear many hats as a solo pastor, including that of the secretary (except for publishing the bulletins and the church newsletters). Being the Jack-of-all-trades helps keep the work interesting and fresh. Yet, not surprisingly, it comes with its challenges. I sometimes feel that I am moving around in a dark closet. I ask parishioners a question of how something is done and nobody knows the answer. On the other hand, it is nice to have the flexibility to try new things.

Having been here only eight months, I realize that I am still in the honeymoon stage. But the people here are good folks. They have been encouraging to me and a good number are dedicated Christians excited about sharing the Gospel.

In spite of the support, the absence of having colleagues and contemporaries is an issue with which I wrestle. Being single and in a small community, it can be lonely, especially when the Myers-Briggs personality test rates me as being 90 percent extroverted. To help with this, I adopted a cat and enrolled in a couple of community education classes, both of which help create a life outside of the congregation.

Now that I am a little bit familiar with the life of a pastor, I have a few pieces of advice to share with seminarians. First of all, I would urge students in their first two years of study to take an active role in their teaching parishes. These congregations are good places to get your feet wet, make mistakes and gain some experience before internship. I found that a lot of students had misdirected ideas about congregational life because they hadn't yet really participated as leaders.

Secondly, especially for those who are commuter students or whose time on campus has been limited, I urge students to develop and value relationships with fellow students. Since the majority of seminary graduates are called to solo positions, the need for collegiality is so important. I have really benefited from a blog that one of my classmates set up for us to ask questions and to share ideas.

Thirdly, and most importantly, I urge seminary students to take their studies and training to heart. God's people really look to us to open the scriptures to them and help guide them as they seek to know more about Christ as their Savior. It has been said that "knowledge is power" and this is certainly true in our context, too. A strong knowledge of the Bible and of Christian theology gives you the tools to preach, to minister, and to raise up leaders.

With joy as well as a few bumps, I have learned much in eight months. I wish you many blessings as you prepare to say "yes" to your call to some corner of God's Kingdom.

You're a Parent!

By Miles Ruch
M.Div. junior plus

I remember standing there, holding our brand-new baby girl. I remember looking into her eyes and I remember talking to her in that incoherent way that most new fathers do. I remember being so happy that my little girl was finally here and the long, arduous wait was over. Then I remember realizing that I had absolutely no idea what I was doing.

Being a father was a completely new concept to me four years ago when Hannah was born. I didn't know how to care for this small, pink, wrinkly, beautiful creature and was sure that I was going to screw it up somehow. Suddenly, I found myself in the place I had been waiting to be and had been afraid to go into...parenthood.

Transitioning from worrying only about me to now being responsible for another life was a trying, difficult and scattered time. No matter how many books you read or how many classes you attend, you are never fully prepared for the first time that your child throws up on you (and your favorite recliner) all in one unforgettable heave. Regardless, you take the experience and learn from it and look for the signs of when something like that is going to happen again. You adapt and you change and you continue moving forward.

This is the time of year when many people begin a transition process of their own. Many people are graduating and preparing for the next step in their journey as they venture

Transitioning from worrying only about me to now being responsible for another life was a trying, difficult and scattered time.

out into churches and communities as pastors, musicians and lay ministers. They have been studying, training and preparing for the day that they receive their diploma and head off into the bright new world. For some, this is a very exciting time filled with wonder and joy. For others, it is a time of fear and second-guessing. "Am I really ready?" "Should I take a few more classes to better prepare myself?" "What if I mess up and fail miserably?"

Change is a very scary thing for most of us. No one wants to be called out of his or her comfort zone and into something that is unfamiliar and different. We are all creatures of habit, and we like things to stay just the way we are familiar with. But we must realize that without change, we do not grow. And if we do not grow, we cannot become what God is calling us to become.

We will get thrown up on and we will not always be prepared for everything that comes our way. But since we know that experience is the best teacher, it is best for us to just grab a towel, wipe off, and take a step of faith into the unknown.

Death: The Ultimate Transition

By John Ahola
M.Div. senior

As I sit down to write this article, I am just returning from preaching at a funeral service for a man that I had known for only a month. The first time that I met him, I knew that he was someone that I was going to like. Sadly, he was in hospice care and his days were numbered. Sitting by his side the first time, he asked me the question, "Pastor, how do you die well?" I felt like the curate Dr. Savonius in Bo Giertz's *The Hammer of God* making the call to the dying man. I knew the "correct" answer to the question from my seminary work but was that enough?

I was in the midst of the final stages of my transition to the parish from the seminary. The process had started a year earlier when my wife and I started interviewing with churches pending her graduation from seminary. Here, this man and his family and friends were undergoing a transition that made

Through all of our transitions we can still cling to the promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

planning my ordination seem almost unimportant.

Transition seems to be one of the constants in life: We are all undergoing transitions of one form or another. I did not expect to meet my wife my first week at the seminary. I did not expect to get married or to have a child while in seminary. This man's question to me caused a transition for me as well. You see the question was more than just a pure systematic theological issue. It was also an issue of pastoral care. Was he worried about being in pain? Was he worried about seeming weak, crying in front of his wife, children and friends?

Was he struggling with issues of grief? Yes. Though we do not talk about it at seminary, the issues of pain and losing control of one's emotions and mind are transition issues during hospice care. He was also troubled with the fear of not being good enough to stand before God. Part of the answer is purely confessional — the application of the Gospel through the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins: Jesus did come and die for this man's sins, as well as for ours. The other issues require an understanding of grief. He was grieving being separated from his family and friends, no longer able to take care of them and provide for them.

I learned from this is that even in the midst of our own transitions, others are also going through these transitions with us. While we may feel that we are in this by ourselves, the truth is we are not. Through all of our transitions we can still cling to the promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Unanticipated Windings of a Teacher's Life

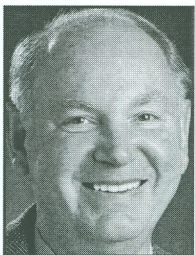
By Joel Smeby

M.A. senior

"Serendipitous" is Jim Boyce's description of his journey from childhood in eastern Iowa, where he recalls learning the 23rd Psalm on his knees, to Luther Seminary, from which he is now retiring after 38 years. The Shepherd was already leading young Jim when his second-grade teacher asked him, "What are you gonna be?" Boyce answered, "A pastor."

Even though his family background is German Lutheran, he didn't take the Teutonic path through the Wartburgs (college and seminary) but opted for the Nordic Lutherans. Why? More serendipity here: The football coach at Luther College recruited him ... and the classics professor there, knowing of Boyce's other interests, stepped in to take him on a campus tour: a done deal.

Looking for money in his first year at seminary, Boyce called Augsburg College



Boyce

to pitch his skills in classics and found a job teaching Latin. More serendipity: He discovered an excitement for teaching and left Luther after two years to pursue a Ph.D. at the University of North Carolina. Right after finishing an M.Div. back at Luther, he was at the front of the class, teaching Greek. But the call to be a pastor was still present. Another recruiter, a pastor acquaintance, stepped into his life and got him to preach at Prince of Peace in Brooklyn Park, where he ended up as a pastor for five years.

Over the years, Boyce has experienced all sorts of Lutheran expressions of piety and polity. He has a deep appreciation for all those in his life (especially his grandmother) who have "passed on the faith" to him. He "sits kinda loose"

with all the "ambiguities" surrounding that main deal at the center: the Gospel. "Word and Sacrament are what God does for us to hear the Gospel," he says. If you want to avoid more ambiguities, though, you'd better to stay away from reading the scriptures in Greek or Hebrew—too many questions come up! But Boyce, taking his students with him, just dives forward into the intricacies of discovering how to read those biblical passages faithfully.

Boyce is still excited about that and about all these seminarians who continue to come forward to participate in the "ongoing renewal of the church." Students should accept the "marvelous and mysterious" callings as gifts for the church. Serendipity again? No, rather the Holy Spirit moving about "where and when it pleases," plunging us all into daily baptism and into the community of faith. Now go grab that Nestle-Aland and suit up to proclaim the Word. Good words of advice from Professor Boyce.

A Lifetime of Vocational Service

By Nicholas Weber

M.Div. middler

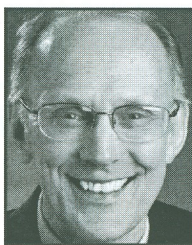
Few people can say that they've been through two church mergers, taught at three different theological institutions and overseen a major curriculum overhaul. Retiring at the end of this year from the position of Olin S. and Amanda Fjelstad Reigstad Professor in Theology, Marc Kolden can.

Kolden grew up in northern Minnesota, where he and his family attended a parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (which would later merge into the American Lutheran Church).

He originally thought that he would go to Concordia College in Moorhead, but he got a huge scholarship "out of the blue" from Harvard University and went there instead. While a physics major at Harvard, he became involved in Lutheran Campus Ministry at a mission-oriented church: "It was there that I really got interested in becoming a minister," Kolden says. So he switched his major to English (that way all of the pre-seminary courses could count toward his degree) and went to Luther Seminary to pursue his M.Div.

He went out on internship while intending to become a pastor but had a bad experience. That, coupled with the encouragement of the pastor at Our Savior's in Minneapolis to do graduate work, led him to the University of Chicago.

After he completed his M.A. and Ph.D. at Chicago, he went on to teach at a seminary in Springfield, Ohio. It was an exciting place, he said, because the curriculum was built by teachers who were unhappy with their own seminary experience. He



Kolden

had to negotiate with students to get them to read.

"They didn't like anything written before 1970, and this was '71, '72!" Kolden says. "And so I'd bargain with them and say, 'All right, I'll read this most recent book if you'll read something from 1948!'"

From there, he became an adjunct faculty member at Luther Seminary, and, after teaching for several years, decided to go into parish ministry to be eligible for a tenure-track position. He and his family moved to Montana, where he served a parish for three years and taught at a local theology school. He then moved back to teach at Luther.

Kolden was academic dean from 1996 to 2003 and oversaw a major curriculum revision in the '90s that shifted the focus toward mission and asking questions about how the church could do mission in a domestic context.

Teaching senior theology has been a favorite experience for Kolden. He also enjoys teaching about vocation, which helps people in congregations see where their Christian lives touch their everyday lives. "Vocation is a lens through which you view all the activities in your life, (and so see God's activity in the world)."

Looking forward, Kolden isn't sure what he will be doing in retirement—perhaps traveling more or finishing unpublished work dealing with the ideas of vocation for lay people. "I really have enjoyed being here. (Luther) is a very supportive institution ... I'm sure I'll miss it."

Meet Your Maeker

By Linda E. Webster

M.Div. middler plus

Rod Maeker is retiring this year from his position as director of Cross-Cultural Education. He has occupied the position since Aug. 1, 1991, first on an interim basis and since 1994 as permanent director.

Still branded with his drawl, Rod was born and grew up on a farm in western Texas, just south of Lubbock. He attended Texas Lutheran College, where he met his future wife, Nancy. He attended Wartburg Seminary and was ordained in 1969.

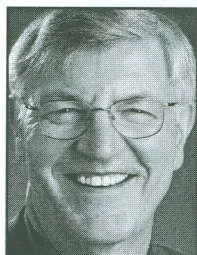
Rod and Nancy's first call was to Trinity Lutheran Church in Stonewall, Texas. There, he met President Lyndon B. Johnson. Rod jokingly tells of turning down an invitation to dinner with LBJ and Lady Bird because of a church function. As he said, "You only turn down the president once."

Rod had many experiences in ministry that made him well-suited to be director of Cross-Cultural Education at Luther. He was director of a multicultural Head Start program, he served a parish that was influential in the underground movement of refugees from war-torn Central America, and he started a mission development that was 95 percent African-American.

The highlights of Rod's time at Luther include the new curriculum that was inaugurated in 1993, which made participating in cross-cultural experience a requirement.

Through the Minnesota Consortium of Theological Schools, Rod sought to forge cooperative efforts in rural and urban ministry. He served for six years on the Steering Committee of the Commission for Multi-Cultural Ministries of the ELCA. Rod has been Luther Seminary's point person to put together the Western Mission Cluster TEEM Program, which develops leaders for under-represented communities of faith and which now includes 62 people. He has also helped develop the Urban Leadership Academy, which identifies, supports and trains high school students as church and community leaders.

Rod has many plans for the future. He anticipates working with Nancy, who is part of the St. Paul Area Synod staff, on the Minnesota Without Poverty initiative. One of his dreams is to help develop a wind energy program on the family farm in Texas. And, for the first time, all his children—his daughter and two sons and their families—are living in the Twin Cities area. As a proud and happy grandparent, he is looking forward to spending time with his four grandsons.



Maeker

The 'River' Reverend

By Nicholas Weber

M.Div. middler

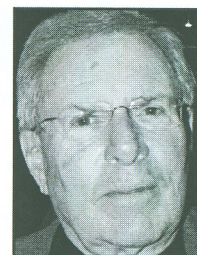
After the end of his second tour of duty as a teacher of worship at Luther, Don Wisner is preparing for his next adventure. He says that in life there are "lake people," who enjoy staying in one place, and "river people," who look forward to life's next event. He considers himself a river person.

Wisner's adventure started at pre-dental school in Pittsburg, where an Episcopal priest challenged him: "Are you ever going to do anything meaningful with your life?" Wisner changed colleges, graduated from what's now Trinity Lutheran Seminary and served as a pastor in Oconomowoc, Wis. He pursued a master's to prepare for his call in campus ministry at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. After serving at Stout, he taught worship at Luther Seminary for eight years.

For most of his career, he served as campus pastor at UW-Eau Claire. He was known for his ability to connect with and mentor students. Nearing retirement, he accepted the call to teach worship again for two years while Luther conducted a search for two positions in worship.

As his time at Luther comes to an end, Wisner says he is grateful to the students and faculty. He's excited about the new crop of church leaders that are being trained and looks forward to seeing them in ministry.

So where will the river take him next? Wisner speculates that he might go into parish ministry again with a team of fellow retired pastors on a part-time basis. As an avid fly fisherman, he also has the opportunity to work for a friend's fly fishing company, a great chance to incorporate environmental theology into his work. "I don't like to think of faith as a journey but rather as a quest," he says. For all those here at Luther who have been guided on that quest by Pastor Wisner, he will be missed.



Wisner

Let Transition Come

By Laure Schwartz

Departing CLI Assistant Director



A transition from one point, mood or atmosphere to another seems simple enough: point A to point B. When my daughter started school, transitioning from one activity or place in the school to another was difficult. She didn't know what to do in the in between. For most of us, this awareness of ourselves in the in between is still difficult. We may want

someone to tell us what to expect next, make this move predictable, how best to respond. Instead of sitting in the unresolved, the unpredictable, and becoming more aware of self, we distract ourselves with worry.

The gift could be that through the transition, God wants to reveal more of the sacred self, made in the very image of God. If we sit patiently, maybe we'll see something we've not noticed before. That's risky; often we're convinced of what we've lined up for our lives. The ego can cause anxiety if the transition looks unfamiliar or takes an unexpected turn. Our manmade image of self could come under criticism. But it means nothing to God. It takes courage to sit humbly in the unresolved, waiting to hear God's words and being watchful for the next life-giving step. Let transition come, challenge you, change you. Ask for this experience to reveal new things to you. Your life will be fuller when you do.

Summer Reading

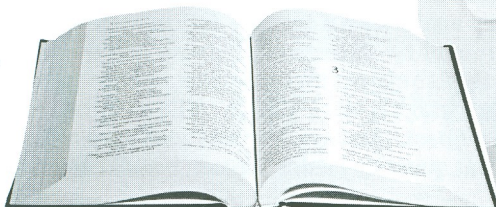
FACULTY



Karoline Lewis
Assistant professor of
Biblical Preaching

- *A Generous Orthodoxy* by Brian D. McLaren
- *The Mighty and the Almighty* by Madeline Albright

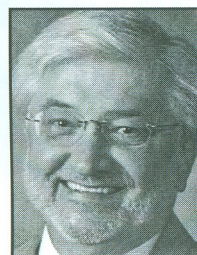
- *The Courage to Teach* by Parker Palmer
- *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* by Sallie McFague
- *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of the Atonement*, Mark D. Baker, editor
- *A Community Called Atonement* by Scot McKnight
- *The Word Militant: Preaching a Decentering Word* by Walter Brueggemann
- *Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching* by Lucy Lind Hogan
- *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*, Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser, editors



Steven Haggmark

Associate professor of Islamic Studies and Christian Mission
Director of the Global Mission Institute

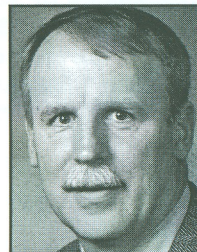
While I'm always looking for newly published material, I also have plans to revisit works that have inspired me in the past. I definitely plan to read Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, a famous, but now obscure long and unfinished novel set in Austria in the 1920s, and his shorter works included in *Five Women*. But I can't be serious all the time. Other projects include the novels of Barry Unsworth, set in Turkey and Greece, and some Cormac McCarthy and Carson McCullers' novels, especially *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* and *Reflections in a Golden Eye*. Finally, I plan to catch up on what is happening in the science fiction genre—I've been away from it too long.



Mark Granquist

Visiting professor of Church History

Sitting on my bedside table, waiting to be read: Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (more on Calvinism than you'd ever want to know); Per Olov Enquist, *Lewi's Journey* (novel about a Swedish Pentecostal leader—thanks, Gracia!); Luther Blissett, *Q* (a novel about the Reformation, along the lines of Umberto Eco); Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Jenkins is always readable, if at times a little dramatic); and Per Petterson, *Out Stealing Horses* (a Norwegian novel about an older man coming to grips with his past). And when I'm out on the beach this summer, re-reading the Jack Aubrey-Steven Maturin ship novels series, all 20 of them!



LIBRARIANS

Bruce Eldevik

Reference librarian

I'm looking forward to reading:

- *Digging to America: A Novel* by Anne Tyler. It's the story of two trans-racial American families, told in Tyler's typical quirky, off-beat fashion.
- *The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron. One of our super student workers recently recommended this 2007 Newberry Award winner. She said it has generated a bit of controversy and it has a surprise ending. I'm intrigued.
- *Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me): Why We Justify Foolish Beliefs, Bad Decisions, and Hurtful Acts* by Carol Tavis and Elliot Aronson. If I don't quite get around to reading this one—it's not my fault.
- *Secrets in the Dark: A Life in Sermons* by Frederick Buechner. This is a collection of his sermons spanning most of his career. Buechner, for me, is always worth reading for his insights on faith, hope, and love.
- *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* by Robert M. Grant with David Tracy. Perhaps a bit too academic for summer, but the designation 'short' gives me courage.



Judy Stone

Circulation assistant

It is always a little embarrassing to admit that most of what I read is not great literature. Here are several writers of mystery series I have been reading for years and become quite fond of their characters. Here is what I currently have holds on at the Ramsey County Library.

- *Damage Control* by Judith A. Jance
- *Degrees of Separation* by Sue Henry
- *Nightshade* by Susan Wittig Albert
- *Winter Study* by Nevada Barr

I have also placed a hold on *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* by Bill McKibben. The author of this book was interviewed on public radio, and that prompted me to place the hold. The book is about the social and ethical aspects of the economy.



Judy Hedman

Administrative assistant, Dean of Students

I have no prepared reading list for this summer! I know I'll read—probably a lot—I just haven't made a list. I do have a plan:

1. I'm going to read at least one book recommended by each of my three sisters. We have vastly different tastes and the change of genre might be good for me.



And, at the very least, I can reject their books based on experience rather than the cover art.

2. I'm going to read books recommended to me by co-workers on topics facing the church, education, society, etc. I already have one that is text-heavy and full of charts. I'm saving that one for afternoons on the patio with a tall glass of something cold. I'm hoping the pleasant surroundings will help me stick with the text.

3. I'm going to re-read some books on my bookshelves before I give them away. Anyone want a copy of *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle? I have three.



Katie Fick

M.Div. middler

I have narrowed my list down to 10 for the sake of everyone's sanity. This is a sampling of what I hope to read this summer:

➤ *The Post-Birthday*

World by Lionel Shriver. Because I love a good story. On a lot of 2007 best fiction lists, this book weaves two alternate futures based on a single, small decision: whether or not to kiss someone.

➤ *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer* by James L. Swanson. Because my brother said it's good, and I loved Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*.

➤ *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage* by Stephanie Coontz. Because I want to know how we got this way.

➤ *Women and Families* edited by Jacob Neusner. Ditto.

➤ *Thursday Next: First Among Sequels* by Jasper Fforde. Because I like novels where I have to catch my breath.

Though a few of those address religion, on a more theological track:

➤ *The Bible in Politics: How to Read the Bible Politically* by Richard Bauckman. Because I want to see if anyone can actually cover this topic.

➤ *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* by Phyllis Trible. Because it's a classic I haven't read yet.

➤ *She Who Is* by Elizabeth Johnson. Ditto.

➤ *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* by James B. Nelson. Because my CPE supervisor recommended it.

➤ *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* by Christopher Hitchens. Because I want to find out how right and wrong Hitchens is at the same time.

Nicholas Weber

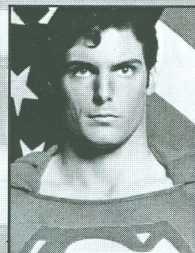
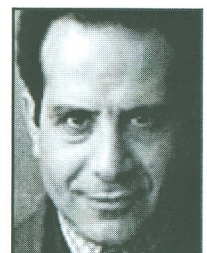
Concord managing editor

➤ *Mountaineering: The Freedom of the Hills* by The Mountaineers, Steven M. Cox, Kris Fulsaa, eds. The reference for mountaineering, *Freedom of the Hills*, also known as "the climber's Bible," covers everything from how to tie knots, using an ice ax to traversing glaciers. It will come in handy for my upcoming adventures in Alaska.

➤ *Fear and Trembling* by Søren Kierkegaard. I've heard good things about Kierkegaard, but haven't gotten around to reading anything of his. This seems like a good place to start.

➤ *Miracles* by C.S. Lewis. I'm a fan of C.S. Lewis but have never finished this one.

➤ *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien. I consider the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy some of the finest fiction ever, but I get bogged down with all the elvish names in this famous prequel. Time to give it another try.



Joel Smeby

M.A. senior

➤ *The Preached Word*, Gerhard Forde
➤ *Law and Gospel*, C.F.W. Walther

Andy Behrendt

M.Div. middler

My summer will include CPE and the start of internship, so my reading will be limited to books recommended or required by my supervisors:

➤ Edwin H. Friedman's *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (already in progress)

➤ Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Church* (for a second, more thorough read)

➤ Rick Warren's *The Purpose Driven Life* (I'm interning at a Purpose Driven church—did you guess?)

Robble, robble!



For Your Health

Boundaries and self-care

By Karen Treat
Luther seminary parish nurse

Better one handful with tranquility than two handfuls with toil and chasing after the wind. Again I saw something meaningless under the sun: There was a man all alone; he had neither son nor brother. There was no end to his toil, yet his eyes were not content with his wealth. "For whom am I toiling," he asked, "and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?" This too is meaningless—a miserable business!

Ecclesiastes 4:6-8

Luther Seminary students are required to attend a boundaries workshop. The workshop makes clear how to establish "personal distance" in working relationships with church members. Self-care boundaries have also been included in the most recent workshops.

I have been very aware of boundaries since the late 1980s, when I met a recovering addict and discovered that in my desire to be with this person I was clearly a codependent. As a codependent, I am most comfortable when there is something that needs to be fixed, when I can move into areas that aren't mine and make all things better for all people. Of course there is much more to the addict/codependent relationship. I just know that in my search for a healthy relationship with my addict, I need to be clear on boundaries.

I have heard a mission developer say about starting a new church, "This job is a lot of fun—until the people arrive." When we have a calling, it can be exciting—until all the expectations set in.

When we begin our ministries, we feel in our hearts the sense of call. We desire to do God's will in all our words and actions, but then, one at a time the expectations come.

Here are my recommendations to prevent you from losing sight of your self-care boundaries:

1. Lift up your reasons for wanting to be a church leader. Remember your sense of call and write down those reasons.
2. Know your boundaries and write them down: Pick a day off; figure out what foods you will eat; remember the Sabbath time; take time for your family and friends; don't forget to exercise daily.
3. Set up your support network outside of family members, using peers, coaches, spiritual directors, and counselors. Have them hold you accountable to your own self-care boundaries.
4. When you pray, remember to listen.

As you set your boundaries and live within them, know that the church and all its believers will know you are doing Christ's work by the contentment in your eyes. Blessings to you in your ministry.

Eat Your Way

Through the Twin Cities

MICKEY'S DINER (DOWNTOWN DINING CAR LOCATION)

36 Seventh St. W., St. Paul (Second location at 1950 Seventh St. W.)
(651) 222-5633

By Andy Behrendt
M.Div. middler

If you want an informed review of a historic downtown dining car, you might as well hear it from someone who has been eating there for the better part of its 70-year history.

"The food's great, but the service sucks," says "Rog," the fellow sitting a couple stools down from me. He quickly damages the credibility of that assessment by laughing and admitting that he's come to Mickey's every day for the last 36 years—"except for 12 days when I was in the hospital and they brought me coffee."

It's the kind of conversation you're bound to have at a restaurant that seats about 30 people. In the half-hour of free parking that you're allowed in the adjacent lot, you're likely to encounter not only regulars like Rog but also teens and 20-somethings who find it almighty cool to eat at a place so chronologically out of their league—not to mention a place featured in all three *Mighty Ducks* movies, the Robert Altman swan song *A Prairie Home Companion*, and Arnold Schwarzenegger's magnum opus, *Jingle All the Way*. Among the cramped customers, you'll find tabletop jukeboxes (non-working and non-refundable), grease-coated menus and a waiter who takes the Lord's name in vain as he shuttles a tub of dirty dishes through the crowd.

Besides all the flair, there's also good food. Mickey's may be most famous for its 24-hour breakfast menu. It features "America's Favorite All-Day Meal," an array of eggs, hash browns, toast and one of several freshly butchered meats, starting at \$7.25 (\$6.25 from 6 to 10 a.m.).

Our dinner party—all two of us—enjoyed a quarter-pound hamburger and a hot ham and cheese sandwich, each with fries, for a total of \$5.40 and \$6.74 respectively. Although the taste was remarkable (the bakery-fresh bread deserves especially high marks), this wasn't quite filling enough—burger enthusiasts may want to consider the \$1.40 upgrade to a half-pounder. We were about to order a milkshake but decided against it when we heard the waiter swearing about the number of shakes he had been making. We meanwhile resisted the temptation of the apple pie (\$2.35 a slice) sitting inches in front of us on the counter, behind a glass sneeze guard. Rog's own recommendation, Mickey's Homemade Mulligan Stew (served with grilled Texas toast for \$5.75), came a bit too late, but you might want to give it a try.

Despite Rog's jabbing, the service ain't bad. A no-nonsense waitress had glasses of water in front of us within 10 seconds of our seating. We had our food within 10 minutes. Our only disappointment was that we were sitting on the opposite side of the restaurant from the grill, which, like virtually everything at Mickey's, is in view for at least some patrons. Note that you can pay by credit card (not by check, and you'll get some guff for using a Green Bay Packers debit card), but you'll have to tip with cash.

Prefabricated in New Jersey in 1937 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1983, Mickey's is a masterpiece inside and out. And although the food might not be the healthiest, Rog is evidence that even 36 years of it won't kill you (we didn't ask whether it caused the hospital stay).

Living in the Eternal Present

External transitions and internal transformation

By Katie Fick

M.Div. middler

We've all seen and heard clunky transitions: Even my favorite TV show of all time, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, had them. The directors and writers would rely too much on the ironic smash-cut: they would show some dastardly demons talking about how Buffy is always on top of her game and then immediately cut to Buffy sleeping in class or something. We've all heard the abrupt move in a sermon to the next topic—I heard a pastor once strain to connect a funny story about the Three Stooges to ... you know, I don't remember, something about a table. But I remember the Stooges. What were they doing there?

Life can be this way—particularly the external transitions. I often am propelled forward awkwardly into things, from CPE and soon to internship, new classes, new people, new jobs, new situations, new relationships. They don't seem to fit together well, they don't have a flow. I think that's one of the struggles in life, to see the connections between what's happening in order to discern meaning and growth. I can easily see a connection between a biblical story and a book I just read—finding the connections in my own life can be more of a challenge.

We have also seen beautiful transitions, stories that unfold and move along beautifully. Here I think of everything from *Pride and Prejudice* to the *Toy Story* movies to the music of Sam Phillips. They tend to have arcs—they build toward a climax and then fade toward a conclusion—and by the end things have changed forever. We like this—Aristotle wasn't kidding in *The Poetics* when he said a whole story needed a beginning, middle and an end. It sounds obvious, yet can fill you with such satisfaction. I am reminded of this every time my husband Norbert and I watch a movie like *Lost in Translation* or *No Country for Old Men*—movies that I think flow more like life than a story, where things don't resolve. Norbert hates them: He can't find any meaning. I find meaning, but I don't yearn to watch them again—my head is satisfied, but not my gut.

Our lives are filled with beginnings, middles and ends, but I find those transitions to be external rather than internal—I may graduate from CPE in a few weeks but that graduation will change my schedule and not the furniture in my brain. I will not be the heroine in the romantic comedy who falls for the boy in a week but also learns in that same period the life lesson that you can't truly love someone else unless you are true to yourself. I have never had an overnight transformative experience. Which has a lot to do with the stories I gravitate toward, I guess—I mean, Elizabeth and Darcy don't see each other across a crowded dance floor and feel the pull of destiny, the sense that something has changed forever—they can't stand each other. And as they become fuller people, they move toward one another. That's a satisfying story to me. And that's largely the way my life works.

I have changed a lot since I came to seminary, as I have over the years evolved as a human being. But all the steps are so gradual that I don't even notice the change until it's pointed out to me. One day it is pointed out that I'm finding the words to articulate what I believe more easily. Another day I discover

that a male resident at my CPE site can make an inappropriate comment and I don't want to run away. Another day I discover that I've stopped always wanting more from Norbert. Another day I realize that I no longer feel the drag of time when I take time out to read and meditate on scripture. But these things didn't happen spontaneously, they were the work of time, of many tiny moments building into the traits of a person in a continued state of transformation.

There are big moments, of course, that do change you, but it takes some time to realize exactly what those changes are. I did my first funeral recently. That was a milestone I won't soon forget. But what does that really mean for me? Did anything really change? I think something did: I saw what it meant for the first time to look people in the eye who saw me as a pastor. Will I find meaning beyond that? I don't know.

I do think the external transitions lead to the internal—that's part of the reason we put ourselves through them—graduations, marriages, births, calls—we choose some transitions for ourselves because we want to propel our lives into something new. We emerge as different people because of them. But they don't automatically change us—I did not become a wife when I said, "I will, and I ask God to help me," and I will not become a pastor when I graduate. To the world, yes, to myself, no. I had to and will discover those transitions within myself. External transitions lead us to internal transformation.

This is part of the reason I'm glad we proclaim an external Word. If God had to wait for me to make an internal change, we'd be here awhile.

Your one-stop source for self-justification

Excuses, Excuses

This month's problem:

Skipping cluster meeting

- **Practical:** "I have to supervise paint drying at my teaching parish."
- **Witty:** "If I went, I would 'perish' ... Get it?"
- **Educational:** "For my teaching parish, I'm being home-schooled."
- **Peer appeal:** "No one from my site is going!"
- **Sob Story:** "All the crying from CPE supervision made me too dehydrated to go."
- **Directionally Challenged:** "Where in the hell is St. Mark's Lutheran Church?"
- **Anagrammatic:** "The Concord ... TORCH CON ED."
- **Dramatic:** "No one ever brings cheese with the whine."



Concord Events Calendar

Minnesota and U.S. History

► **The Declaration of Independence** is coming to the Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, May 6-18 for a free public exhibit. As part of the Office of Secretary of State's 150th anniversary they are bringing a rare, original printing of the Declaration of Independence; the copy is known as a "Dunlap Broadside." It will be on display with two handwritten copies of the **original Minnesota State Constitution**.

Exhibit schedule:

■ Wednesday through Sunday, May 7-11, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

■ Tuesday, May 13, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.

■ Wednesday-Sunday, May 14-18, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

► **Historic Statehood Celebrations** at the Minnesota State Capitol, Saturday, May 11 and Saturday-Sunday, May 17-18. Come celebrate the 150th birthday of Minnesota and see historical characters, listen to music, tour the Capitol and see the golden horses; www.mnhs.org/statecapitol.

► **Free Day.** Visit any of Minnesota Historical Society's 26 historic sites and museums for free on June 1! This includes Fort Snelling, Minnesota History Center (a lot of very cool events happening that day), Jeffers Petroglyphs Historic Site, Comfrey MN. Check out the website for a list of amazing places to explore in Minnesota: www.mnhs.org.

Multicultural meetings

► **Marinita's Table:** Ignite enduring **cross-cultural connections** through intentional social interaction. Meals held at the home of Marinita Schroedl, 2136 Penn Ave. S., Minneapolis. Please e-mail her if you plan to attend:

marnita@marnitastable.org. More info at www.marnitastable.org

■ Sunday, May 18; noon-3 p.m. I, Citizen: What is my responsibility as a citizen? What can I do? Am I doing enough? What role should the government play in our every day lives?

■ Thursday, May 22; 6-9 p.m. What's the Difference/Dialogue on Diversity: How do we learn to celebrate our differences and learn from the richness of other people's cultures? What can I do to include more people from different backgrounds or cultures in my social circles? What can I learn from people who are not the majority in our community? What is the difference between diversity and cross-cultural competency?

■ Friday, June 13; 4-11:30 p.m. I Have a Dream Graduation Party: A Party in the Garden. Price of entrance: you must share the dream you hold for yourself for the future. I Have a Dream: Teen Leadership—Young people share their dreams for the future and talk about strategies for achieving their goals and identify a peer-to-peer mentor met at the table to keep them on track.

Festivals and Celebrations

► **Syttende Mai**, Saturday, May 17, 3 p.m., Old Muskego Church. Join us for a hymn sing, followed by lefse on the lawn to celebrate Syttende Mai, the Norwegian Constitution Day Celebration.

► **Flint Hills International Children's Festival**, May 27-June 1. This is the perfect event for the entire family. See incredible international performers inside the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts, 345 Washington

St., St. Paul, (all tickets \$5), participate in free activities outside. There are activities all over St. Paul — this is the way to introduce young children to the performing arts — and you'll have a great time too! More information at www.ordway.org

► **Grand Old Day**, Sunday, June 1. The largest one-day festival in the Midwest! Parade, contests, concerts—it's a Grand Old Time! Festival is located on Grand Ave. from Dale to Fairview in St. Paul. Detailed schedule at www.grandave.com.

► **Famous Dave's BBQ & Blues Festival**, June 7. Fourth annual festival. Admission is free to the public and features outstanding national and Twin Cities-based blues acts on two stages, outside at 11th St. and Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis; www.famousdaves.com.

Looking Ahead

► **Twin Cities World Refugee Day Celebration**, Friday, June 20. Minnehaha Falls Park, 4801 Minnehaha Ave. S., Minneapolis, starts at 2 p.m. www.tcworldrefugeeday.org.

► **Juneteenth Celebration**, June 21. Parade, 3 stages of music, food, community organizations, and much more. Bring the whole family. Free admission and parking. Theodore Wirth Beach Road, Minneapolis; www.juneteenthminnesota.org.

► **Back to the 50's Weekend**, June 20-22, Minnesota State Fairgrounds, St. Paul. 35th annual car show boasts more than 11,000 street rods, customs, classics and restored vehicles, all dating from 1964 and earlier, blanketing the entire State Fair grounds; www.msra.com.

► **Minnesota State Fair**, Aug. 21-Sept. 1; www.mnstatefair.org.

► Keep your attention on the **Minnesota Orchestra's** Web site to watch for their free summer concerts; www.minnesotaorchestra.org

► **Free Music and Movies** in the parks—throughout the summer in various locations. Minneapolis: www.minneapolis-parks.org, "Activities & Programs" link. St. Paul: www.stpaul.gov/parks, "Events/Entertainment" link.

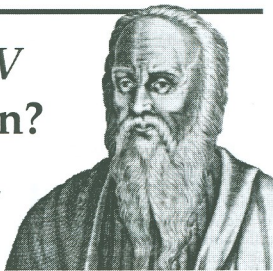
► **St. Paul Saints baseball**—a fun time for the family! www.saintsbasketball.com.

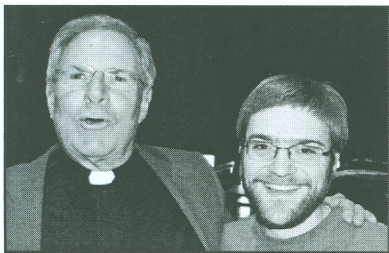
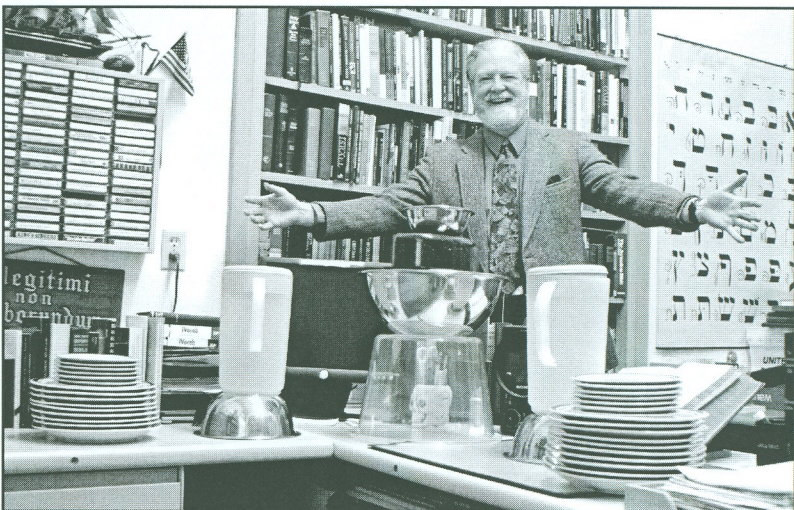
Ask Boso!

Real theological answers from Anselm's famous foil

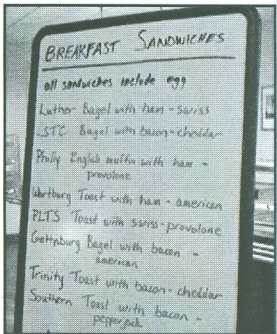
What does *Grand Theft Auto IV* say about our human condition?

"To judge from what I am hearing, we live very dangerously."





'07-08: Wasn't it great?

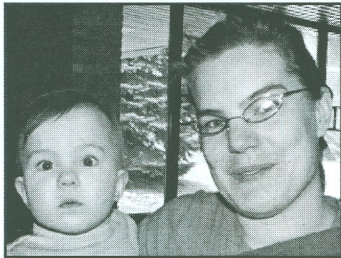


The Concord asks ...

What's your favorite thing about the school year ending?

"That it's ending. Another phase of life is beginning."

- Kristen Onan
M.A. senior
with daughter, Mackenzie Onan



"The sun. I'm going to Phoenix."

- David Purcell
M.Div. junior

"That I'll graduate. It's been a long haul."

- Elizabeth Mascal
M.Div. senior



"I am just so excited about all my colleagues who are going to be using their gifts now, to let loose and join God's activity in the world."

- Karin Craven
M.Div. senior

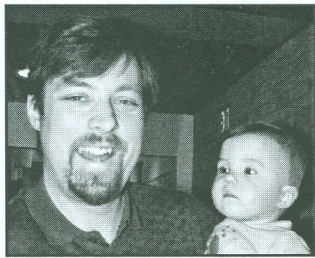


"I can get back to writing my unfinished books."

- Lois Malcolm
Associate professor of Systematic Theology

"Finally moving on. Being a senior, it's all about freedom."

- Kris Madsen
M.Div. senior
with Mackenzie Onan

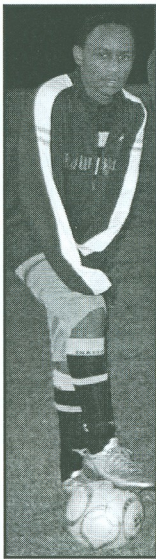


Down the Hill

Luther Seminary
through younger eyes

Soccer? Football!

By Robert Obaga
Son of William and Margaret Obaga



I really looked forward to the transition of moving to the United States from Kenya because it was my first time out of Africa and, for that matter, I would get to travel in an airplane, something I had always wanted to do. When I first arrived here in late August of 2005, I didn't know what to expect when moving to a completely new environment with a very different culture. I didn't realize how much I would miss friends and family until my parents and I arrived in the U.S. Most of all, I missed, and still miss, my brother and sister. But, after settling in, I got used to it by keeping in contact through phone calls and e-mail. Also, I had not seen roads all over the place connected in all directions before. It was confusing to find things at first, but I

know my way around better now.

The people I met and the friends I made at school were all great; they were friendly and helped me adapt and feel at home. I made my first friends on the Roseville Area High School soccer team, most of whom I have played with on the same team during the past three years. Also, during these last three years, I have enjoyed playing with the Luther Seminary Heretics soccer team. At times I felt odd being the youngest player in the league, but after a couple of games it became normal. One thing I like in this league is the team name, the Heretics. I think this name might be very intimidating to our opponents. Those on the team whom I played with were great and became my new friends. I get to see some of them at seminary events and in my neighborhood at Sandgren.

It took me a while to get used to calling football "soccer" (it is football to Kenyans and everyone else in the world). In addition to soccer, I've been involved with basketball tournaments as a member of the St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church youth team. This year we had a fantastic season, going unbeaten in the league, although we got knocked out in the second round of the annual Augsburg tournament.

Something I haven't gotten used to, and probably never will, is the weather. I find the weather to be extreme in all seasons—over 80 degrees with high humidity during the summer, and below zero in the winter. The only good seasons are fall and spring. I am glad winter is now over, as I also graduate from RAHS this May. It has been an enjoyable three years at high school where I constantly made new friends. I now look forward to the future challenges of college life, where I plan to continue my studies with a major in graphic design.

ON THE COVER: This month's featured image once again comes courtesy of M.Div. middler Amber Marten, who is the photographer and illustrator. Fellow M.Div. middler Kate Schrubba portrays the evolving seminarian.